

03-301

The Secretary of State informs their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission of the changes in the procedures that missions, embassies and consulates will follow to obtain the services that the Office of Foreign Missions provides to the members of the diplomatic and consular community. OFM has made these changes after soliciting input from representatives of the diplomatic and consular community and believes that these re-engineered procedures will improve the provision of its services.

Constituent Posts Processing via OFM's Regional Offices

Effective immediately all notifications of appointment, termination and change for consular officers, consular employees, service staff and private servants located at career consulates and miscellaneous governmental offices outside of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area should be directed to the responsible regional office of the Office of Foreign Missions.

DIPLOMATIC NOTE

The Office of foreign missions has six regional offices located throughout the United States. Each office is responsible for providing service to a certain geographic area. OFM's regional office in:

New York City accepts notifications of appointment and applications for other services for the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania.

Miami accepts notifications of appointment and applications for other services for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi.

Chicago accepts notifications of appointment and applications for other services for the states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana.

San Francisco accepts notifications of appointment and applications for other services for the states of Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Alaska, Hawaii, Northern California and Northern Nevada.

Los Angeles accepts notifications of appointment and applications for other services for the states of New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Southern Nevada and Southern California. The newly opened **Houston** Regional office is not yet processing notifications of appointment or applications for other OFM services. As soon as it is fully functional, the Office of Foreign Missions will inform each embassy of the re-aligned areas of responsibility that the regional offices will serve.

Embassies in Washington D.C. will continue to submit all notifications of appointment, termination and change and applications for OFM-provided services for embassy personnel directly to the Customer Service Center of Office of Foreign Missions in Washington at the International Drive location.

Procedure regarding the recognition of Honorary Consular officers set forth in the Department's Circular Diplomatic Note date August 6, 2003, remains in effect. Notifications of appointment for Honorary Consuls should be submitted by the embassies in Washington.

Missions Applications for all OFM Services Together with Initial
Notification of Appointment

In the past, missions were instructed to submit applications for OFM services in a staggered sequence. The notification of appointment was the basis for a mission member's status in the United States and documentation of the accreditation was required before an Embassy, Mission or Consulate could apply for documentation with regard to driving, identification and evidence of tax exemption eligibility.

Effective immediately, and in order to speed up the process, missions are instructed to submit all applications for OFM-issued documentation upon initial notification of appointment. While the principals and dependents are pending accreditation with the Office of Protocol, OFM will issue driver's licenses and tax exemption cards. Only in cases when the applicant needs vision testing, may individual Mission and Embassy members hand carry their documentation to OFM's Customer Service Center in the International Center.

Elimination of Some Fees

In the past, the OFM imposed fees for services based on reciprocity. Some of those fees are minimal and accounting for the fees costs more than the fee itself. Effective immediately, OFM is eliminating collection of fees less than \$50.

Original Foreign Titles

In the past, OFM required missions and mission members to submit their original titles when registering imported vehicles. The documents were then maintained at OFM until the vehicle was ready to be exported. Effective immediately, OFM will return the original documents to the mission along with the OFM license plates. The original titling documents will be stamped with an annotation that clearly states that the vehicle is registered with OFM, and that the original document is "not valid for registration in the United States."

Processing Registrations and Titles through OFM's Regional
Offices

In the past, OFM's regional offices (with the exception of the New York Regional Office) only received and forwarded to Washington paperwork for registration and titling of motor vehicles. Regional offices always processed temporary registrations.

Effective immediately, all OFM regional offices (except the newly opened Houston office) will now process requests for registration and titling process, including insurance updates.

Impose Reciprocal Disposition Fees at the Time of Registration

OFM imposes some fees to mirror duties imposed by other countries. In the past, OFM imposed these fees upon disposition. Effective immediately, OFM will collect the disposition surcharge up front, at the time of initial registration. This will only be done for those countries, where the surcharge is collected for periods to exceed the standard

assumed tour of duty of 3 years. The fee will be a percentage of the purchase price of the vehicle. At the time of actual disposition, OFM will recalculate the surcharge using the reciprocal formula and collect or refund the difference. Individual missions, where this is the case, will receive an individual diplomatic note explaining how this process will be executed.

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Department of State,
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